

**Council Agenda Item #1:** Roll Call

The Caribou City Council held a City Council meeting, Monday, April 10, 2023, in the Council Chambers with the following members present; Mayor Smith, Deputy Mayor Boma, Councilors Theriault, and Willey. Councilor Bagley was present via Zoom. Councilors Goughan and Morrill were absent and excused.

Manager Thompson was present for the meeting.

Department Managers Gary Marquis (Superintendent of Parks & Recreation), Peter Baldwin (Library Director) and Kenneth Murchison (Zoning Administrator/CEO) were present for the meeting.

Melissa Lizotte of the Aroostook Republican covered the meeting, and it was broadcasted via Spectrum and YouTube.

**Council Agenda Item #2:** Invocation/Inspirational Thought

Reverend Ron Rosser offered the invocation.

**Council Agenda Item #3:** Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Council Agenda Item #4:** Public Forum

Mayor Smith read an email from Matt Till:

“Dear Council Members,

My name is Matt Till, I work for Spectrum as a Maintenance Technician.

I apologize for not being in person tonight, I have a men's league basketball championship game at the rec, and I just can't miss it!

A few months ago I stood up and told the city council that I believed Spectrum was the way to go as far as city investment goes. I wanted to send a note today to reiterate that point.

Spectrum has the fastest, most reliable internet speeds, and the company depth that is needed to go along with providing and maintaining this service.

As I understand it, the Pioneer Broadband proposal would have an administrative employee and a few on-call electricians to provide service, maintain lines and provide emergency assistance. Further, it's my understanding that it is said, once this system is installed, there will be no maintenance required. I'd like you to please think about technology in general, in a broad sense, have you ever known it not to need updating?

In fact, the lines and fiber optic system need so much regular maintenance, that there are

7 full time maintenance technicians in Aroostook County, 3 that live here in Caribou. To put it in perspective, Spectrum has 11 full-time employees that live in Caribou alone. These employees along with their coworkers work to install and maintain quality service. This does not include the many customer service representatives that are involved locally and nationally. My point is, that it is going to take more than a part time service team and one administrative professional to keep a system like this working smoothly.

Lastly, I'd like to note that not only does Spectrum provide a needed service to local businesses and homeowners, it provides high quality jobs to more than 11 Caribou residents. These residents, and their families, are very involved in activities that support the Caribou community.

I'd like to see the City of Caribou support Spectrum in their proposal to bring line extensions to our area.

Thank you for listening.

Matt Till”

**Council Agenda Item #5:** Minutes

a. Regular City Council meeting – March 13, 2023

Motion made by Councilor Theriault, seconded by Councilor Willey to accept the March 13, 2023, minutes as presented.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, C. Boma – Yes, R.M. Goughan – Absent, J. Morrill – Absent, J. Theriault – Yes, L. Willey – Yes, J. Smith – Yes. (So voted)

**Council Agenda Item #6:** Bid Openings, Awards, and Appointments

a. Certificates of Recognition for Aroostook League Senior Scholar Athletes

Deputy Mayor Boma explained the Aroostook League has recently held its annual Senior Scholar athlete banquet and honored Senior Scholar Athletes from the 17 Aroostook League High Schools. Caribou High School had two students that have been named 2022-2023 Aroostook League Senior Scholar Athletes.

i. Kayley Bell

ii. George Ferland

Mayor Smith presented Kaylee Bell with a certificate.

b. Façade Improvement Grant Award – 149 Bennett Drive

Manager Thompson explained that the City has a façade improvement grant that business can apply for and receive funding to help with improvement projects to their facilities.

The Façade Improvement Committee met on March 28<sup>th</sup> and voted unanimously to award \$7,500 for a major façade improvement remodel.

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Boma, seconded by Councilor Theriault to accept the results of the Façade Improvement Grant committee, and award a Façade Improvement grant in the amount of \$7,500 to Megan Dinneen for the property at 149 Bennett Drive in Caribou for a major façade improvement.

Ms. Dinneen came in and extended her gratitude for being awarded the grant for her business.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, C. Boma – Yes, R.M. Goughan – Absent, J. Morrill – Absent, J. Theriault – Yes, L. Willey – Yes, J. Smith – Yes. (So voted)

**Council Agenda Item #7:** Public Hearings and Possible Action Items

a. Public Hearing – Application for ARPA County funds

Open Public Hearing: 6:15 p.m.

Deputy Mayor Boma read a letter from the Caribou Fire and Ambulance Department:

“The Caribou Fire and Ambulance Department is requesting your assistance in funding new turnout gear for our firefighters. With 75% of our members with outdated, worn and sub-standard Personal Protective Equipment our members are at a much greater risk of being injured by fire or exposed to blood borne pathogens as well as harmful PFAS off gassing. Upgrading this sub-standard equipment has been a high priority for the Caribou Fire and Ambulance Department.

Our current replacement plan has tried purchasing new sets of gear. Unfortunately, with times being what they are and revenue being so tight, this goal is almost impossible to achieve 100% compliance with current standards. This extended replacement program extends the time that our members will be at risk when doing their jobs. We feel that when we reach 100% compliance with NFPA standards that the City replacement schedule could be maintainable by the Caribou Fire and Ambulance Department with yearly deposits in a capital account for future replacements.

This updated Personal Protective equipment would keep our members at the highest level of protection that is required, more importantly, they deserve. This turnout gear will provide our first responders with protective gear that will improve safety for entry operations into fire/EMS situations, that are most prevalent in our area and our surrounding communities and keep our first responders safer on the roadway’s we protect and there personal health. The gear we currently use is unsafe, worn out, most being older than ten years old, the reflective strips discolored and worn. We have had this gear repaired and cleaned on a regular schedule in order to keep it in the best condition possible. Many of the stitches have deteriorated to the point where they pull apart while firefighters are operating in hazardous areas. Most recently the gear has been used to protect staff during the COVID-19 outbreak, again getting used beyond its needs.

The total of \$91,000 represents the full amount of the project for replacing worn out gear with low PFAS gear and a proper gear extractor, washer. The lower PFAS will not only protect our firefighter during an incident but after, when the gear is washed it will have a lower amount of dangerous off gassing, unlike our traditional gear we have currently in use. The gear will also be properly sized for the firefighter allowing for the best protection in workable gear. With financial help from the County ARPA grant program it will not only keep our current firefighters safe, it will aid in recruitment of new volunteers by the public seeing the investment we are making in the safety of our local first responders. We can easily complete this project within the one-year requirement.

If awarded this grant we would be able to move quickly towards implementation. Within 60 days of the grant award we would have everyone fitted for the equipment. Within 12 months of the grant award we would be able to have this new equipment on site and be able to utilize it. We are ready to move forward for the safety of our department. I thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Chief Scott Susi”

Mayor Smith read a letter from the Caribou Police Department.

#### **“2023 American Rescue Plan Act**

#### **RE: Letter of Support**

The Caribou Police Department would like to thank you for the opportunity to be part of the *Rescue Plan Act Application Grant Process*. As outlined in the Application, COVID-19 threw The Caribou Police Department into several daunting tasks never attempted by a city or town of our size. The Caribou Police Department became the only facility in Aroostook County to temporarily hold prisoners not only for Caribou, but for a half dozen other departments in Aroostook County. When the Aroostook County jail went offline in the early stages of COVID, The Caribou Police Department not only housed these prisoners, but we devised a technological plan with the jails, courts, and other facilities throughout Aroostook County so that prisoners could meet with their attorneys, meet with Judges, and be processed locally right from our facility.

The diversion of implementing these new tasks and staffing them with 14 officers took away from body worn camera purchases and updating our antiquated radio communications tower. It’s no secret that the above upgrades are not only imperative to reducing liability, but they are also essential for Caribou’s emergency infrastructure to remain viable. A recent study Conducted by [the University of Cambridge's Institute of Criminology](#), found that body-worn cameras reduced the use of force by roughly **50 percent**, and complaints against police also fell 90 percent during the study period compared with the previous year. If awarded the 2023 American Rescue

Plan Act Grant the City of Caribou would be able to move forward with modern technology upgrades that we could not afford to implement otherwise.

The officers and staff at the Caribou Police Department hereby submit this letter of support to be attached as part of the application process.

With Gratitude,

Sgt Keith Ouellette & Chief Michael Gahagan”

Manager Penny Thompson read a letter from the Caribou Professional Firefighters IAFF Local 5191:

“Caribou Fire and Ambulance Department provides fire coverage for five communities and additionally provides ambulance for twelve communities. Our current turn-out gear was purchased in 2015. This gear has reached the end of its useable life. Many of this gear was damaged in the wind storm that happened in December of 2022 when a tree fell on a propane tank at the Caribou Nursing home.

In August of 2022, the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) joined forces with the Metro Chiefs to bring attention to the health risks posed by PFAS in turnout gear. PFAS also known as “forever chemicals” are a category of manufactured chemicals linked to cancer and other occupational diseases and are typically found in turnout gear. PFAS has been linked to cancer, which is the leading cause of death for firefighters. In a study published by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health identified that Firefighters have 14% higher risk of dying from cancer versus the general public. PFAS containing materials have been used in turnout gear since the 1940s to repel both oil and water.

The newer turnout gear that is now being manufactured today has lower PFAS containing material. According to guidance provided by the IAFF, PFAS-free turnout gear should be purchased when it become available. This new gear would greatly help with the health of the Firefighter of Caribou for many years to come.

Sincerely,  
Scott Dow

President Caribou Professional Firefighters Local 5191”

Closed Public Hearing: 6:24 p.m.

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Boma, seconded by Councilor Willey to approve the City of Caribou 2023 Aroostook County ARPA program application in the category of Public Health and Negative Economic Impact”

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, C. Boma – Yes, R.M. Goughan – Absent, J. Morrill – Absent, J. Theriault – Yes, L. Willey – Yes, J. Smith – Yes. (So voted)

b. Public Hearing – Chapter 15 Nylander Museum

i. Library Director Peter Baldwin

Open Public Hearing: 6:25 p.m.

Mayor Smith explained that the City Council is working to get a board established and get the museum open and operating again.

Peter Baldwin (Library Director) explained that he does not believe that the Library should be removed as the administrator with establishing a working board. Under the library it would give access to funding, approval of payroll and to budgetary.

Councilor Willey explained that the Nylander Museum would be maintained as a Special Collection of the library.

Closed Public Hearing: 6:32 p.m.

Motion made by Councilor Willey, seconded by Deputy Mayor Boma to approve the revised version of Chapter 15.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, C. Boma – Yes, R.M. Goughan – Absent, J. Morrill – Absent, J. Theriault – Yes, L. Willey – Yes, J. Smith – Yes. (So voted)

**Council Agenda Item #8:** Reports by Staff and Committees

a. Tax Acquired Property – Map 34 Lot 63, 20 Hillcrest

Gary Marquis (Superintendent of Parks & Recreation) requested that the city retain the property at 20 Hillcrest Avenue to provide access to the ballfields.

Motion made by Councilor Theriault, seconded by Deputy Mayor Boma to abate the taxes in the amount of \$567.41 and retain the property of 20 Hillcrest Ave, Map 34 Lot 63.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, C. Boma – Yes, R.M. Goughan – Absent, J. Morrill – Absent, J. Theriault – Yes, L. Willey – Yes, J. Smith – Yes. (So voted)

b. Manager's Report

Manager Thompson reviewed the City Manager's report dated April 10, 2023.

**Council Agenda Item #9:** New Business, Ordinances and Resolutions

a. Maine DOT construction overlimit permit – West Gate Road

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Boma, seconded by Councilor Theriault to approve a Construction Overlimit Permit for Maine Department of Transportation for the Greenlaw Brook Number 2 Bridge Replacement Construction project #021696.00.

Councilor Bagley expressed his concerns regarding the blanket permission in regards to heavy equipment operating on the roadways.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, C. Boma – Yes, R.M. Goughan – Absent, J. Morrill – Absent, J. Theriault – Yes, L. Willey – Yes, J. Smith – Yes. (So voted)

b. NBRC Letter of Intent – Riverfront Master Plan

Councilor Willey explained that the letter of intent is because the Caribou Riverfront Renaissance Committee (CRRC) is working to apply for a grant and would like to receive the council's permission to authorize staff to submit a letter of intent.

Motion made by Councilor Theriault, seconded by Councilor Willey to authorize City Staff to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) for the NBRC Catalyst Grant Program 2023.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, C. Boma – Yes, R.M. Goughan – Absent, J. Morrill – Absent, J. Theriault – Yes, L. Willey – Yes, J. Smith – Yes. (So voted)

**Council Agenda Item #10:** Old Business

There were no items scheduled for discussion.

**Council Agenda Item #11:** Reports and Discussion by Mayor and Council Members

Councilor Bagley explained that information has been received from Pioneer with the study that was conducted by BIG.

Councilor Willey explained that the CCS group for Show Choir got a gold award, and the documents had no notes of needed improvement.

Motion made by Councilor Willey, seconded by Councilor Theriault to support any company who will complete line extensions at no cost to the City of Caribou for every current address in the City of Caribou. We welcome the current scope of services as outlined by Spectrum/Charter in the email received Monday April 10.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, C. Boma – Yes, R.M. Goughan – Absent, J. Morrill – Absent, J. Theriault – Yes, L. Willey – Yes, J. Smith – Yes. (So voted)

**Council Agenda Item #12:** Next Regular Meetings: Regular Meeting April 24

**Council Agenda Item #13:** Executive Session(s) (May be called to discuss matters identified under MRAA, Title 1, §405.6)

Council did not enter executive session.

**Council Agenda Item #14:** Adjournment

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Boma, seconded by Councilor Theriault to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Danielle Brissette, Secretary